

SPIRITUAL VALUES AND THEIR ROLE IN THE LIVES OF YOUTH

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Annotation. This article provides an in-depth analysis of the attention paid to values today, how these values are being transmitted to the young generation, their role in the future lives of youth, and the significance of spiritual values.

Keywords: value, spiritual values, national values, regional values, universal human values, axiology.

“If the body of social life is the economy, then its soul and spirit are spirituality. As we have decided to build a New Uzbekistan, we rely on two strong pillars. The first is a strong economy based on market principles. The second is a strong spirituality grounded in the rich heritage of our ancestors and national values” [1], said Shavkat Mirziyoyev during a meeting.

Today we live in an era of rapid transformation—one extremely intense and complex, fundamentally different from any past period experienced by humanity. In such a time, every nation must have its own independent voice, thought, and worldview. Especially, the views of young people must stand at the forefront in this regard.

Every individual has a personal lifestyle, habits, routines, and behavioral rules shaped over the course of life. Observing the surrounding world, its changes, events, social and interpersonal relations, people evaluate them based on their worldview. They measure not only material but also spiritual worth. Based on this assessment, an object either becomes valuable or loses its value. A person distances themselves from what lacks value and strives toward what is valuable, preserving and cherishing it. Through preservation, value becomes lasting and turns into what we call a value.

The origin of the concept of “value”

Values are studied within the science of Axiology in Western countries. This term was introduced into academic discourse in the second half of the 20th century by German axiologist N. Hartmann and French scholar P. Lapi. The discipline can literally be called “value studies,” as its core concept is “value,” known in Western terminology by the word axio (value). [2]

Values represent a concept used to express the significance of objects and events, as well as the social material and spiritual wealth of society. In them are reflected all creations, material and spiritual, that hold meaning for a people or for humanity as a whole. [3]

The subject matter of Axiology includes: the restoration of national values; national identity; national consciousness and sentiments; national culture; language; customs and traditions; their role in forming spiritual maturity and worldview; their contribution to creative activity; the interconnectedness of national, regional, and universal values; the mediating role of our social, political, material, and spiritual values in integrating our Republic into the global community; the disregard and suppression of these values in the recent past; and their revival after independence, as well as their importance in social development and democratic state-building—analyzed from a philosophical standpoint.

A phenomenon becomes a value not only because it had significance in the past but also because it possesses the potential to create new opportunities for the future.

If a value is important not only for an individual but for an entire nation—and connected to ethnic traits and characteristics—it becomes a national value. Every nation, regardless of size or population, has its own significant values.

Every nation possesses distinct characteristics and values formed over centuries through history, culture, and spiritual heritage.

The development of a nation and its spiritual values progresses in harmony. Every national custom and tradition emerged out of necessity.

As humans began to engage in conscious labor, the need to improve productivity arose, which led to the formation of various skills and habits—such as singing songs, participating in collective dances, competitions, and offering material and spiritual encouragement. These, in turn, led to the creation of work songs, folk melodies, various forms of national art, games, as well as customs, holidays, and traditions. Over the years, through natural and social changes, they were refined and evolved, acquiring different degrees of significance for the nation.

Although language, script, and even religion may change over time, values do not lose their essential meaning.

Certain values that have become part of national character and intergenerational upbringing remain a source of moral education. For example, the tradition of greeting elders upon waking or entering the home, or showing respect through various daily gestures—these habits embody profound meanings of respect and affection.

“Based on the ancient proverb ‘**A guest is as honorable as your father**’, the tradition of showing special respect and hospitality toward guests is deeply rooted. When speaking of hospitality—expressed through warm greetings and mutual concern—host women bake bread and set aside the most beautifully browned loaves specifically for the guest. The finest quilts stored on the raised platform (**takhmon**) are reserved for visitors, and even if there is only one piece of livestock in the household, it is not withheld from being slaughtered for an esteemed guest. During holidays and other significant occasions, values such as visiting the elderly, the sick, the weak, or those in need, helping neighbors with their work, and organizing communal labor (**hashar**) play an important role in fostering spiritual unity within the community. In this regard, the famous Fergana Canal—constructed in forty-five days through communal effort—serves as a notable example. To this day, people continue to organize **hashar** when building houses or carrying out other tasks, while neighbors and members of the local community prepare and distribute food for the volunteers.”

“This immortal value of our people is highly beneficial in the process of leadership, particularly in efforts to develop and beautify the country. Hashar is a value of social character; at its core lie notions of solidarity, mutual harmony, labor productivity, and mutual assistance — all of which carry significant educational importance.

“During the harvest of agricultural products, as well as in the construction of neighborhood centers, bridges, roads, and similar buildings and structures, **hashar** gatherings are organized, and in many cases this practice takes on a festive spirit. The customs listed above have, over the centuries, become enduring habits for our people—norms that have become deeply ingrained in their way of life.

Although such values may have changed in form and appearance over the years, their essential meaning and essence have been preserved. These traditions are consistently observed in the daily life of the people. Events aimed at celebrating important occasions and dates in people’s lives are considered ceremonies conducted according to specific rules shaped by national mentality. In these ceremonies, official and symbolic traditions, customs, and norms are

followed, and they are passed down from generation to generation. Underlying these traditions, customs, and norms is a particular cultural and spiritual meaning.”

“For example, in wedding ceremonies, it is customary for the groom’s family to send a matchmaker to the bride’s family. According to tradition, this custom is believed to have been inherited from Adam, who is said to have been the first to approach Eve. Traditionally, the first matchmakers would attempt to secretly scatter silk fibers in the household. The symbolic meaning of this act was that the bride should be gentle and agreeable, like silk. It is not surprising that this custom developed during the period when silk had just been introduced to our land and silk fabrics were highly valued. Once the bride’s family agrees, a ceremony called ‘non ushatish’ (bread throwing) is performed as a token of engagement, during which a pair of breads is thrown simultaneously. The symbolic meaning of this ritual is to wish that the couple be precious to each other like bread at noon and grow old together in harmony

“If we analyze the phrase ‘may it be as precious as bread,’ its history dates back thirty centuries. In the Avesta, the earth, the wheat that grows upon it, and the bread made from its yield are all highly exalted, indicating that even in those times, bread was considered sacred, much as it is today. That is, according to the Avesta—a book created 3000 years ago and regarded as a ‘guide to life’—it is stated that:”

“The Prophet Zoroaster asked Ahura Mazda:

‘O Ahura Mazda! Who is the one that makes the earth the happiest?’

Ahura Mazda replied:

‘O Zoroaster! It is the one who carefully cultivates and prepares it for sowing!

O Zoroaster! The one who sows grain, sows the truth...’

Thus, among our people, traditions such as respectfully observing and kissing fallen bread before placing it in a clean spot, placing bread under the pillows of infants in cradles, giving bread to those embarking on long journeys, and the previously mentioned ‘non ushatish’ ceremony have been shaped and preserved over centuries as deeply valued cultural practices.”

“If we analyze each element of wedding ceremonies that have developed over the years, we see that they are not merely customs or rituals, but manifestations of national virtues. Let us consider the bride’s farewell ceremony. The bride bids farewell to her relatives in tears, and at the conclusion of the farewell, the father always gives advice to his daughter, emphasizing that in her new home she will be valued only for her hard work, kind words, affection, and proper manners. He then offers a white blessing (oq fотиha) together with the gathered community. The essence of this ceremony encompasses several deeply rooted values: the sanctity of the family and the central role of the family head (father), implying order and discipline within the household; the dignity of marriage; the love and mutual respect among family members; the glorification of labor and proper conduct as conveyed through the father’s advice; and, symbolized by the bride’s tearful departure, the veneration of one’s birthplace and homeland. These elements collectively reflect values intertwined with national identity.

“In conclusion, every custom, habit, proverb, and legend that has become a value carries within it the path traversed by our people over thousands of years, their way of life, and the identity that has been formed over time. National values serve as a spiritual, ideological, and educational tool in understanding one’s identity and uniting the nation. Indeed, it is the desire of today’s generation that every young person deeply comprehends our national values and confidently expresses their own thoughts.”

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